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REVIEWS

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE OXFORD MOVEMENT

GEORGE RUNDLE PRYNNE. By A. Clifton Kelway. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1906.

The facility with which incongruities are changed into congruities is the most fascinating problem which confronts the student of history. Dates and facts are without doubt the A B C of that study, but the adult mind rejoices rather in the ever varying view points, the unexpected tergiversations of popular opinion ever ready to cast aside old forms and standards and substitute in their place undreamt of criteria.

The pious protestant of 1852 blanched and shuddered at Prynne's introduction of such devilish devices as collection bags in place of plates, and at his clothing himself at preaching-time in the popish surplice. Little did that outraged individual dream that his descendants could stand quietly by and see such deeds perpetrated. But not only in things ritualistic have opinions changed, but equally so in matters theological — a point which such excellent scholars as H. O. Wakeman forget when writing about the triumph of the Tracts for the Times.

In 1869, just twenty-seven years before he was joyfully hailed by a vast majority of his countrymen as the ideal man for the Archbishopric, Temple's elevation to the See of Exeter was regarded by a great number of people as a blight upon the Church. Pusey, whose deliverances voiced the feelings of many learned and thoughtful men wrote on that occasion protesting against "the horrible scandal of the recommendation of the editor of 'Essays and Reviews' to be a Christian Bishop." And yet, we repeat, this unchristian editor was within twenty-six years the accepted leader of the English Church, and accepted even by Pusey's intellectual descendants.

Of this transitoriness of the formal side of life we are reminded by the book which has been put in our hands for review. Considered in itself, the book is poorly written, devoid of style, and lacks painfully the necessary element of a well worked out arrangement. But though indifferently

done, and upon an unimportant personage, it is, however, of considerable value in its giving what its sub-title calls "A chapter in the early history of the Catholic Revival." Doubtless for those to whom the daily Eucharist foreshadows the "victory of the Anglican Communion," the story is of surpassing interest, but for the world at large it can be of interest only in its picturing to them the egregious narrowness of the average Churchman of sixty years ago. For the specialist, as we have just said, it should be valuable; its portrayal of a phase of the so-called Oxford Movement can not fail to attract attention.

George Rundel Prynne was probably never heard of by the world at large, barring the moments when his name figured in the legal columns of the papers; the story of his life can be compressed within a single sentence. For fifty-five years he was Vicar of St. Peter's Church, Plymouth, and made himself locally notorious by commencing during the cholera scourge of 1849 the daily celebration of the Eucharist.

He belongs to that glorious company of self-sacrificing men who spend themselves for the good of the small community in which they live. He was not a great man, the comparative smallness of his work giving evidence of that; though the author of his biography frequently drops in remarks upon the unfairness of Prynne's never having received preferment. But the law of supply and demand is never violated, no matter how extraordinary some men may appear to their admirers. It is a significant thing that big men never do extreme things; the history of state and church requires a searching examination into the careers of the small "fry" whose all too great willingness to resort to excesses is cautiously made use of by the really able ones, but never participated in. Such was the relation of Prynne to Pusey. He reminds us in many ways of T. T. Carter, though a perusal of the life of each leads to the conclusion that Carter was the larger man.

As for actual points of interest in the book before us, the description of the row — "row" is the only word it deserves — which occurred when Bishop Philpotts came to confirm at St. Peter's, is exceedingly interesting to those who study English prejudices (pp. 108-110).

The account of the prosecution carried on against him on the charge of conducting compulsory confession (in 1852), and the overwhelming interest felt and vociferously voiced by the *hoi polloi*, give us a picture of real vividness and suggestiveness. How impossible such scenes would be in indifferent religious America! We cannot pass by without commending to all who are prone to put the importance of ritual above that of canonical discipline, the account of his submission to his bishop on the question of the ceremonial use of incense (pp. 175-181). He was a typical example of the level-headed extremist. Would there were more of them in this controversial world!

We regret that such a man should have been "written up" by one whose bias is so evident on every page. The frequent repetition of such expressions as "the Sacrament of Penance in the English Church has become a regular part of the work in so many parishes" (p. 16); "the great Sacrifice was continually pleaded during the early hours of the day" (p. 196); "So vital a doctrine as the Sacrament of Penance" (p. 116) — the frequent usage of such terms show the reader unmistakably the ultra-partisanship of the author. We conclude as we began. The book is worth reading for two classes of people: Those who specialize upon the development of theological thought, and those particularly interested in the Oxford Movement.

ARTHUR R. GRAY.

DOCUMENTS OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES

It is perhaps one of the failings of our Southern culture that in contrast with our appreciation of the spoken word we are apt to neglect the written words of the past. How much this failing has hurt the history of the South it is hard even to surmise. We therefore welcome such signs as appear in the publication of State archives, which is now being carried on in more than one of our Southern States. In the last number of *THE SEWANEE REVIEW* we congratulated the State of Mississippi on the results of Mr. Dunbar Rowland's excellent work.